

Identification Form

Agency Information

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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

MEETING ROOM 75
2 pm

Box 418

AGENDA

SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

JUNE 9, 1975, 2:00 P.M. IN S-407 IN THE CAPITOL

Testimony by Mr. Richard Bissell
Former Deputy Director, Plans,
Central Intelligence Agency

INVENTORIED: 

ON MAR 15 1977

BY _____

TOP SECRET

R215

~~copy 1 of 15~~

MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1975 - SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA - AFTERNOON

SUMMARY OF EXPECTED TESTOMONY OF

JUSTIN O'DONNELL

INVENTORIED
ON MAR 15 1977
BY [signature]

At 2:00 p.m., before hearing Mr. Bissell, the Committee will hear briefly the testimony of Mr. Justin O'Donnell regarding Lumumba.

O'Donnell was in OSS and CIA for almost 30 years and Station Chief for CIA in Bolivia, Thailand, Turkey and Holland. When he came back to headquarters in early 1960 he became Deputy Chief of Staff D of the Directorate of Plans. The Chief was William Harvey.

In the Fall of 1960, Patrice Lumumba had been dismissed as Premier of the newly independent and troubled Congo. He was under house detention, but was being guarded -- and protected -- by U.N. forces, and thus was beyond the immediate reach of President Kasavubu and emerging strong man Col. Mobutu.

At this time (Fall of 1960) Mr. Bissell was DDP. (As Station Chief in Turkey in the late 1950's O'Donnell had come to know Mr. Bissell.) Bissell called O'Donnell in and asked him to assassinate Lumumba --

Bissell sent him to a scientist in the Technical Services Division who, in effect, described various chemical and biological techniques and said "pick your poison."

O'Donnell went back to Bissell and refused to do it because he was opposed to assassination. O'Donnell then went immediately next door to Helms' office (Helms was then Bissell's deputy) and told him what had transpired. Helms agreed O'Donnell had been right to refuse. These events all occurred on the same evening within an hour.

O'Donnell did agree to go to the Congo to run a political operation to neutralize Lumumba. His plan was to entice, or snatch, Lumumba out of his protective U.N. detention and turn him over to Mobutu for trial under Congolese law for crimes he had allegedly committed. O'Donnell was in the Congo for 3 months.

In the Congo, O'Donnell was told by the Station Chief Lawrence Devlin that there was a virus in the Station Chief's safe. O'Donnell clearly understood this to mean a lethal one for use against Lumumba. He heard no more about it. He does not know if we had anything to do with Lumumba's actual death, but does not think we did.

Subsequently, while in the Congo he spoke about assassination, in the context of the Congo, with Devlin and with Bronson Tweedy, the Africa Division Chief.

TOP SECRET

GENERAL NOTES ON RICHARD BISSELL

A. Background: Academic. Supposedly brilliant. Economics Professor

B. General re Career at CIA (1952-1962)

1. 1952-59: Personal Assistant to Dulles

a. Guatamala Operation

b. Credited with moving Agency toward technological intelligence gathering, recognizing classical espionage of little value vs. USSR.

(i) U-2

(ii) Satellite beginnings

2. 1959-1962: Deputy Director for Plans *

a. Intimately involved in Bay of Pigs

b. Removed (allegedly because of Bay of Pigs) spring 1962 +

* Allegations have been made of his involvement in Castro, Trujillo, Lumumba specifically and "Executive Action" generally.

+ Note Bay of Pigs occurred in 4/61. According to the 1967 CIA study, Bissell reinstated the Mafia operation in 11/61. If true: what was his relationship to higher authority at that time?

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BISSELL

CASTRO*

I. Statements re Bissell (B) in CIA's 1967 Study

A. 8/60 Mafia Connection

1. B asks Edwards (E) to get ~~for~~ syndicate (14)
2. Says by late Sept., E. O'C & B only to know

B claims J.C. King originated. (At least shows B involved).

B. Late Sept. or Oct. 1960 Alleged Dulles Briefing

Apparently based on E. Note vagueness (18)

Also note that in 1961 E. told the FBI Dulles didn't know of Mafia.

C. has record being approached by Harvey in 2/61 in connection with sensitive project for B. (27)

D. B presses termination 6 months before Bay of Pigs (33)

In fact it continued.

E. Executive action (37)

1. Harvey("H") briefed by B 2/61.
2. H says early in JFK administration B called in re Exec Action i.e. "a general standby capability to carry out assassinations when required"

* The "Executive Action" story is mentioned (somewhat confusingly in the CIA study in the midst of the Castro story (see D below).

a. Harvey's notes quote B as saying "the White House has twice urged me to create such a capability."

b. "B recalls discussing the question of developing a general capability with Harvey."

Does this mean he didn't recall the WH part?

c. ZRRIFLE. QJWIN

F. H's notes say on 11/15/61 he discussed with B application of ZRRIFLE to Cuba. And B instructed him to take over E's contact with the criminal syndicate and run against Castro. (39)

II. Justice Department

A. 5/22/61 FBI report re 5/3/61 meeting with E

1. Said only B and 2 others were aware of Giancana/Mahen. "Dulles was completely unaware"

2. Said B told AG during recent briefings to RFK and Taylor that "some of CIA activity involved use of G and underworld."

N.B. at this time E was telling the FBI only that the G/M operation was in connection with gathering intelligence.